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AUTH Mikhail Solntsev from the "Utro" program -- live

SUBS [Studio interview with Major General Yuriy Grigoriyevich Gusev, deputy  
commander of the Russian Ministry of Defense Space Units, by Mikhail  
Solntsev from the "Utro" program -- live

SUBJ TAKEALL-- Deputy Ministry Chief on Space Program  
Full Text Superzone of Message

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- 2 [Text] [Solntsev] Good morning once again to all our viewers, and I have  
great pleasure in introducing our "Utro" program studio guest, Major  
General Yuriy Grigoriyevich Gusev, deputy commander of the Russian  
Ministry of Defense Space Units. Yuriy Grigoriyevich, first of all,  
please satisfy our viewers and my curiosity as to what are these  
mysterious space units, or are they not all that mysterious?
- 3 [Gusev] Good morning. They are not so mysterious, seeing how much is  
written and talked about space today, and space activity remains the topic  
of discussion in Russia as well as in countries of the Commonwealth of  
Independent States. There are a number of agreements on space activity  
wherein space units are involved. Therefore, space units are not such a  
Terra Incognita [unknown land], as they say, and they are at space  
centers, control centers, landing sites, and so on. That is, all the  
elements of the ground infrastructure which ensures the launch, and  
operation of the space equipment during flight.

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- 4 [Solntsev] Well the name space units itself conjures up visions of Star Wars, and space invaders; you are not going to do battle with space invaders, are you?
- 5 [Gusev laughing] Well, if there are such, we will first investigate who they are. However, in principle, space units are units which ensure the operations of the orbital group [orbitalnoy grupirovki] which resolve the problems of providing the armed forces with various forms of provisions, including navigational, cartographic, geodesic, communications, control, and so on. That is, that whole spectrum of tasks which today, in line with modern military concepts and modern armies, are solved more effectively by space resources, and which frequently simply cannot be solved in other ways.
- 6 [Solntsev] Tell us Yuriy Grigoriyevich, at the source of our space rocket program, as is probably in all other countries which conduct launches, there were military people, and this was primarily a military program. Today however, if we consider the relationship of scientific or civilian launches, and launches in the interests of the military, how do they correlate?
- 7 [Gusev] You are correct when you say that historically, the creation of space centers, and the first launches were carried out by the military. True, but here it must be stipulated that it was always with the participation of industry. Today, the interests of defense, as well as the national economy, science, and international cooperation. Today's correlation is approximately 30 to 40 percent are civilian launches, and about 50 to 60 percent, military. By the beginning of 1995 or 1996, -- and this tendency exists, and it is confirmed -- the number of launches in the interest of the national economy and defense, will be approximately equal, with an ongoing growth nevertheless, favoring civilian launches.
- 8 [Solntsev] At present, there is quite a lot of talk that we have taken a very spineless position in our military doctrine by giving ground to our, let us say, potential enemies by not being sufficiently in opposition to them, and in general, surrendering our position. As far as satellites, intelligence satellites are concerned, who has more in space, we, NATO or the United States?
- 9 [Gusev] I think that at present, NATO has the greatest number of intelligence satellites.
- 10 [Solntsev] This speaks of our weakness?
- 11 [Gusev] Not weakness necessarily. These are the missions that they set for their space units, or as the Americans call it, Space Command. But, in fact, if we count what there is in orbit out there, then it will be clear that the NATO group, including the United States, have more.
- 12 [Solntsev] More eh! Well, there is talk that it is possible, for instance, to steal an enemy's, or a likely enemy's, spy satellite from orbit. Is that possible?
- 13 [Gusev] Well, it is possible, in principle. Of course, I doubt if we would steal a satellite today just like that. However, the shuttle operations, and our maintenance work on the orbiting station show, in principle, that it possible to come near, to approach the satellite and load it into the compartment. True, if anyone has attentively watched the telecasts of the flight of the orbiting station, or the shuttle, or when they show the space apparatus, it is obvious that they bristle with various kinds of antennae and various kinds of instruments, that is why one would have to prepare extremely carefully for such an act.

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15 [Text] [Solntsev] Today is 2 October, and in two days it will be the 35th anniversary -- not quite an even one, but an anniversary nevertheless -- of the launch of the first artificial satellite from earth, which was built in the then USSR.

16 [Gusev] Yes, 35 years ago, the first artificial satellite was launched from the present Baykonur Space Center, the PS, the simplest satellite [prosteyshiy sputnik], which began the space era for mankind. [Video shows an excerpt from an archive film of the first sputnik launch]

17 Today, hardly anyone remembers it. I do not mean Russia, but the world, and specifically at the last symposium in which the International Astronautical Federation, the International Space Academy, and various other organizations participated, this fact somehow escaped the attention of the world community.

18 [Solntsev] When the first launches began, first the satellites and then the manned space launches, there was quite obvious competition between the United States and the USSR as to who was faster, who was quicker. Later, it seems, we fell behind, or do you not consider that we have?

19 [Gusev] Yes, there really was such competition, and recently, literally yesterday, a unique film was shown on how the Americans planned the first manned Mercury flights, and there one could really see that the spirit of competition existed. But then, due to various circumstances, we fell behind primarily in finer technologies, specifically, in the element base, optics, and electronics. Here, our parameters were somewhat lower, I mean from the point of view of service life, and dependability. But nevertheless, in the final analysis it turned out that the Russian space program was not that far behind the United States for example, and in some instances, it even excelled. However, in the number of problems to be solved, and by the quality of their solution, today one most probably must say that, the realization of problem solving is approximately the same.

20 [Solntsev] I have one more question. There are many reports and much talk that the Plesetsk space center -- the northern space center -- will be used for manned launches. Is this so, and when could this come about?

21 [Gusev] The northern space center, Plesetsk, could be used for manned launches, but first, the space center needs some work. And second, to be able to carry out a manned program from the Plesetsk space center, we need to change the orbital position of the station correspondingly. That is, to change its orbit in such a way so that it would be possible to launch transport and cargo ships and ensure supplies to this station from the Plesetsk space center.

22 [Solntsev] I have one last question. Do you believe in the existence of UFO's?

23 [Gusev] I personally do not believe in the existence of UFO's in the form described as some kind of mysterious apparatus' from which humanoids appear. However, I can confirm that there are real, to date incomprehensible, and unidentifiable phenomena, inasmuch as I have seen such phenomena during a flight in an aircraft. True, not in the form of an object, but in the form of a ray of light which performed definite movements in the air, and to this day the origin of which is still a mystery to me.

- 24 [Solntsev] Good, I thank you. The "Utro" program questions were answered by Major General Yuriy Grigoriyevich Gusev, the deputy commander of the Russian Ministry of Defense Space Units. Thank you very much, and success in your service.
- 25 [Gusev] Thank you, and taking this opportunity I would like to congratulate my colleagues, all those who are involved with astronautics, and all those who took an active part in solving the problems of space in past years, on the forthcoming 35th anniversary of the launch of the first artificial satellite from earth.
- 26 [Solntsev] Thank you very much. [Video shows a launch, control room, various antennae, aerial view of a launch pad, space equipment and assembly, a gantry view of the launch pad, and a rocket being railed out of the hangar, erected, and launched] (endall) 011945 [REDACTED]  
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